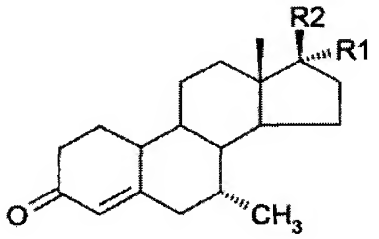
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of 7α-methyl steroids of the formula I



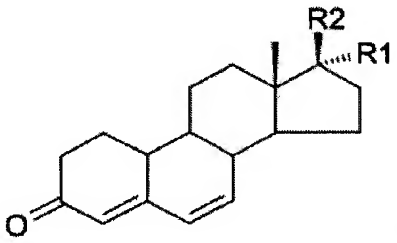
(I)

wherein

R1 is hydrogen, methyl or [C=CH] C≡CH;

R2 is $(CH_2)_nOH$, wherein n is 0, 1 or 2;

by a copper mediated 1,6-conjugate addition of a Grignard reagent CH_3MgX, X being a halogen, to the 4,6-unsaturated 3-ketosteroid of formula II,



(II)

wherein R1 and R2 are as previously defined,

comprising:

protecting the hydroxy group of the steroid of formula II with a trialkylsilyl group,

followed by treating the hydroxy protected steroid with the Grignard reagent CH_3MgX.

2. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1, wherein R1 is hydrogen, methyl or [C=CH] C≡CH and R2 is OH~~; or R1 is hydrogen and R2 is $(CH_2)_2OH$~~.

3. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the Grignard reagent is CH_3MgCl.

4. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the trialkylsilyl group is a trimethylsilyl group.

5. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the solvent of the Grignard reaction is tetrahydrofuran, diethyl ether or a mixture thereof.

6. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the concentration of the steroid of formula (II) is 0.1 to 0.3 molar.

7. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the steroid of formula (II) to the Grignard reagent is 1:1 to 1:7.

8. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein as copper catalyst copper(II) acetate or copper (II) chloride is used.

9. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 1, wherein the reaction temperature of the Grignard reaction is -78°C to 0°C .

10. (Previously Presented) The compound 21-hydroxy-19-norpregn-4,6-dien-3-one.

11. (New) The process of claim 1, wherein R1 is hydrogen and R2 is $(CH_2)_2OH$.